

December 24, 2025



THE EVE OF THE NATIVITY

By Sister Katherine "Kit" Gray, CSJ

Introduction

It's Christmas Eve and the Scripture passage for the morning is from Luke's Gospel (1:67-79). It is the Canticle of Zechariah, proclaimed at the circumcision and naming of his son, John (the Baptist). Only the final verses are about John who shall be "called the prophet of the Most High"; most of the canticle is an expression of God's awesome power to save all through Jesus Christ. I saw connections with the titles of Jesus celebrated in the O Antiphons (Dec 17-23). (For an introduction to the O Antiphons, refer to the reflection on December 21.)

The Canticle of Zechariah

*Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel,
for he has visited and brought redemption to his people.
He has raised up a horn for our salvation
within the house of David his servant,
even as he promised*

*through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old:
salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us,
to show mercy to our fathers
and to be mindful of his holy covenant
and of the oath he swore to Abraham our father,
and to grant us that,
rescued from the hand of enemies,
without fear we might worship him
in holiness and righteousness
before him all our days.
And you, child, will be called prophet of the Most High,
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,
to give his people knowledge of salvation
through the forgiveness of their sins,
because of the tender mercy of our God
by which the daybreak from on high will visit us
to shine on those who sit in darkness and death's shadow,
to guide our feet into the path of peace.*

LUKE 1:68-79

The O Antiphons

O Wisdom of our God Most High,
guiding creation with power and love:
come to teach us the path of knowledge!

O Leader of the House of Israel,
giver of the Law to Moses on Sinai:
come to rescue us with your mighty power!

O Root of Jesse's stem,
sign of God's love for all his people:
come to save us without delay!

O Key of David,
opening the gates of God's eternal Kingdom:
come and free the prisoners of darkness!

O Radiant Dawn,
splendor of eternal light, sun of justice:
come and shine on those who dwell in darkness and in the
shadow of death.

O King of all nations and keystone of the Church:
come and save man, whom you formed from the dust!

O Emmanuel, our King and Giver of Law:
come to save us, Lord our God!



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For Pondering

- What connections do you see in the Canticle and the O Antiphons?
- Which title of Jesus is most meaningful to you?
- What are your thoughts and/or feelings as you prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus?

For Prayer

*Almighty God,
you make us glad with the yearly remembrance
of the birth of your Son Jesus Christ:
grant that, as we joyfully receive him as our redeemer,
we may with sure confidence behold him
when he shall come to be our judge;
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever.*

COLLECT FOR CHRISTMAS EVE MORNING PRAYER

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